



Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020 - 2040

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Muswellbrook Shire Council acknowledges that within its local government area are the Traditional Lands of the Wanaruah and Kamilaroi people. We acknowledge these Aboriginal peoples as the traditional custodians of the Shire's land, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and future. We also acknowledge all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who now live within the Muswellbrook Local Government Area.

Muswellbrook Local Strategic Planning Statement October 2020

The Statement is available on Council's website: www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABS Australian Bureau of Statistics

CPP Community Participation Plan

CSP Community Strategic Plan

MDCP 2009 Muswellbrook Development Control Plan 2009

DPIE Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

EP&A Act Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979

HRP Hunter Regional Plan

IP&R Integrated Planning & Reporting

LALC Local Aboriginal Land Council

MLEP 2009 Muswellbrook Local Environmental Plan 2009

LGA Local Government Area

LG Act Local Government Act 1993

LSPS Local Strategic Planning Statement

MSC Muswellbrook Shire Council

NSW New South Wales

TAFE Technical and Further Education NSW

TfNSW Transport for NSW

DEFINITIONS

Short Term 0-3 Years

Medium Term 4-8 Years

Long Term 8+ Years

Ongoing - actions that will continue to be implemented for the lifespan of the LSPS.

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The Muswellbrook Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) is part of a hierarchy of strategic land use planning documents and is a mandated requirement of the NSW State Government under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The Muswellbrook LSPS implements the actions in the Hunter Regional Plan and Council's own priorities as set out in the Muswellbrook Community Strategic Plan and other adopted strategies and actions.

Hunter Regional Plan 2016-2036.



The Hunter Regional Plan provides the overarching strategic framework to guide the NSW Government's land use planning priorities and decisions in the Hunter Region. The NSW Government's vision for the Hunter is: **the leading regional economy in Australia with a vibrant new metropolitan city at its heart.**

To achieve this vision the NSW Government has set four goals for the region:

1. The leading regional economy in Australia.
2. A biodiversity-rich natural environment.
3. Thriving communities.
4. Greater housing choice and jobs.

Muswellbrook Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027

The LSPS will shape how Council prepares and amends the Muswellbrook Local Environmental Plan (MLEP) and Muswellbrook Development Control Plan (MDCP). The Muswellbrook Community Strategic Plan identifies the community's main priorities and aspirations for the future and identifies strategies for achieving these goals.

The LSPS implements the Community Strategic Plan as it relates to land use and the built environment and informs other Council strategies where they seek to influence land use planning outcomes. This Plan captures the community's shared vision for the Shire. The Community Strategic Plan has had a direct influence in the development of the Muswellbrook Local Strategic Planning Statement.

Council's engagement with the community to prepare the Community Strategic Plan, the Muswellbrook Local Environmental Plan 2009 Review Discussion Paper, and other Council policies, has identified that the community wants to see:

- Improvements to people's wellbeing, sense of safety and belonging.
- Increased opportunities for creativity, jobs and investment.
- Protection, conservation or re-use of heritage places and buildings.
- Enhancement or protection of the Shire's natural assets and scenic qualities.

Appendix 1 sets out how the LSPS and the Community Strategic Plan goals align.

STRUCTURE AND INTERPRETATION

The LSPS identifies the key outcomes Council aims to achieve when developing policies and making land use decisions, and in advocating to other levels of government regarding decisions that involve the Shire. The LSPS advocates a balance between competing values and issues and providing certainty for those who want to invest in new or expanding enterprises in the Shire or who want to live in our towns, villages and rural areas.

The LSPS consists of:

- A 20-year vision that captures the future desired state for the local area.
- 3 key themes that identify the higher-order objectives for strategic land use planning in the LGA.
- 19 planning priorities that identify the main issues to be addressed to deliver the Vision and Themes.
- A set of Planning Principles for each planning priority that guide decisions on planning proposals and land use planning.
- Measurable Actions that outline specific projects that will be added to Council's work programs to implement the LSPS.

LOCATION

Muswellbrook Shire is centrally located in the Upper Hunter Valley and at the junction of several significant environmental and physical infrastructure assets. These include:

- The junction of the Hunter and Goulburn River valleys;
- The connection between the Blue Mountains (Wollemi National Park) and the Liverpool Ranges;
- The junction of the Main Northern Railway line and the Ulan Valley railway line; and
- An important connection between the Golden Highway and the New England Highway.

By road, Muswellbrook is approximately three hours from Sydney, three hours from Dubbo, two hours from Tamworth and 90 minutes from Newcastle.

Muswellbrook Shire has a geographic advantage in servicing surrounding areas. Several State Government Departments and Agencies have offices located in Muswellbrook Shire and have based regional and sub-regional operations here to service the Upper Hunter. These include, Corrective Services, Juvenile Justice and the Area Command for NSW Police. Muswellbrook District Hospital recently completed a significantly larger emergency department and planning is currently nearing completion for stage two of development on the site.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Muswellbrook Shire contains significant areas of natural beauty and rich biodiversity.

The Shire forms part of a convergence zone for ecosystems that are characteristic of the north coast, western slopes and Sydney Basin. Large areas of sandstone plateau country are protected in the Wollemi and Goulburn River national parks. The remainder of the Shire is a mix of cleared valley floors and floodplains with intensive agricultural and equine activity, undulating slopes and steep vegetated slopes with rocky outcrops.

The combination of created rural landscapes, and the remaining natural landscapes that form visible ridgelines, provides locations of great beauty, particularly Baerami, Bureen, Denman, Giants Creek, Hollydeen, Kerrabee, Manobalia, Martindale, McCullys Gap, Muscle Creek, Sandy Hollow, Widden and Wybong.

Over 1,405km² of the Shire is National Park (41% of the LGA by surface area). But past land clearing has created a major discontinuity in natural vegetation along the Great Dividing Range. Strategic revegetation projects in the Muswellbrook Shire Council area, from the Wollemi National Park boundary north toward the Upper Hunter Shire, would play an important role in repairing this discontinuity.

Heritage

The Shire has a rich history and contains:

- Part of the Greater Blue Mountains Area which is identified on both World and National Heritage lists;
- Eight State Heritage registered items; and
- 4473 recorded Aboriginal sites.

Temperature and climate change

The Upper Hunter experiences distinct seasonal variations in temperature. In summer the highest average maximum temperatures are in the range of 30–32°C, although days above 40°C do occur several times through the summer months.

Long-term records indicate a gradual increase in temperatures in the Hunter since the 1960s. More sustained warming has occurred over the most recent decades. Maximum temperatures are projected to increase by 0.7°C by 2050 and by 2.0°C by the year 2100. Minimum temperatures are projected to increase by 0.7°C by 2050 and by 2.1°C by the year 2100.

With Climate change there are projected to be more hot days over 35°C and fewer cold nights.

Rainfall and climate change

Average annual rainfall ranges from 400–800 mm. More rainfall occurs during summer and autumn, with lower rainfall in winter and spring.

The long-term rainfall record (1900–2013) shows that the Hunter has experienced considerable variation in rainfall with periods of both wetter and drier conditions. During much of the first half of the 20th century the region experienced drier conditions. From the 1950s to the 1990s there was more inter-annual variability with many wet years and many dry years.

In the Hunter, most climate change models (8 out of 12) agree that autumn rainfall will increase in the near future and far future. Most climate change models (8 out of 12) also agree that spring rainfall will decrease in the near future.

More information on the changing climate can be found on the Adapt NSW website

<https://climatechange.environment.nsw.gov.au/>

Hazards and Risks

The primary hazards in the Shire are flooding and bushfire. The Shire also experiences regular earth tremors. Council has recently completed new bushfire prone land mapping for the Shire and has forwarded this to the Rural Fire Service for authorisation. The mapping indicates extensive areas of the Shire are at risk from bushfire, however the main population areas of Muswellbrook, Denman and Sandy Hollow are not in high hazard locations.

Muswellbrook and Denman are located adjacent to the Hunter River. A series of levees have been constructed to reduce flood impact on existing urban areas. The Muswellbrook Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan 2019 provides detail on flood patterns, historical floods and recommendations for Council to action. There is enough flood free land in the Shire to not require the expansion of urban activities into flood prone locations.

As the fire season, rainfall, evaporation and humidity levels change with climate change, more vegetation types are being acknowledged as possible sources of high-risk fires. Property owners and Council will need to study these risks when considering the location and design of new development.

Waterways

With fertile soil adjoining most of the waterways in the Shire, there has been a high degree of disturbance to native vegetation in the riparian corridors adjoining waterways. Landcare groups have formed to manage weeds and restore native vegetation in some locations. But more could be done to limit stock access to waterways and replant vegetation.

THE COMMUNITY

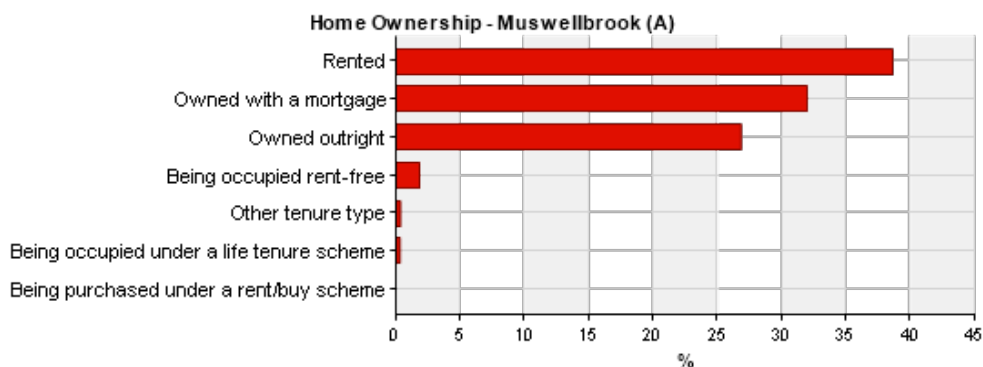
The Shire is part of the country of the Wanaruah and Kamilaroi people, and remains home for many Aboriginal people. Europeans settled in the area from 1819 and the town of Muswellbrook was surveyed in 1833.

The Region is experiencing slow but sustained growth. Census data indicates 16,086 people were living in the Muswellbrook Shire Local Government Area in August 2016. It is expected that the population will grow in the short, medium and long term, with a projected population of approx. 20,000 by 2038. The population of Muswellbrook Shire tends to be a younger community, with the median age of people being 35 years (2016 ABS Census).

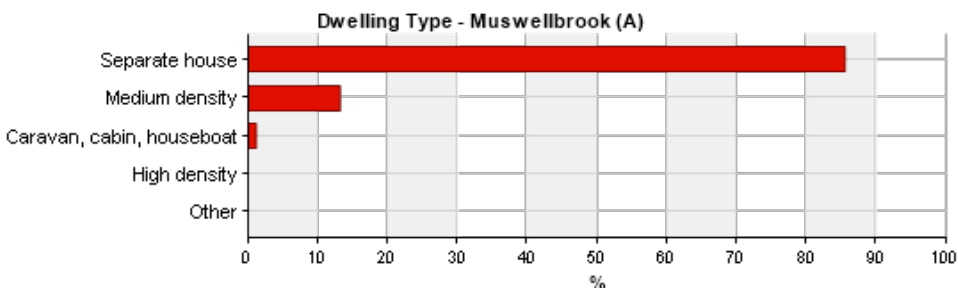
The largest life stage group in Muswellbrook is “Working Age (30 to 64 years)” representing 45.5% of the overall population.

The towns and villages of the Shire offer cultural, recreational, educational and community facilities for residents and visitors. Muswellbrook and Denman are the largest towns in the Shire, followed by the village of Sandy Hollow, and the rural locations of Wybong, Baerami, Martindale, McCullys Gap, Widden, Muscle Creek, Kayuga and Liddell.

It is estimated that 58.8% of residents own their home, either outright or with a mortgage.



Over 85% of the Shire's housing stock is detached dwellings on single lots. This low housing diversity limits the ability for some people to buy a home, and limits opportunities for people to change housing type throughout their lives.



Mining activities have resulted in a reduction of small rural and rural lifestyle lots near Muswellbrook and Denman. Preparation of a housing Strategy would assist in determining the extent that this is a housing preference for the local community.

POPULATION AND FUTURE CHANGE

Muswellbrook Shire Council 2019 NSW Population Projections



Key Indicators: Projected Population, Households and Dwellings - all data at 30th June

	2016	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041
Total Population	16,450	17,100	17,600	17,950	18,200	18,350
2016 Population Projection	17,150	18,000	18,800	19,550	20,300	
Total Households	6,450	6,900	7,250	7,550	7,800	7,950
Household Size*	2.47	2.40	2.35	2.30	2.25	2.22
Implied Dwelling Projection**	7,550	8,100	8,500	8,850	9,150	9,350

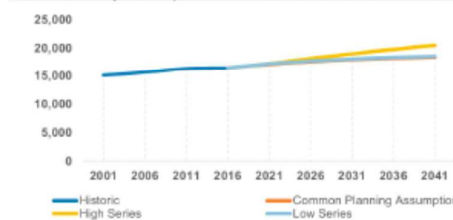
*Average persons resident per occupied private dwelling

**Dwellings required if the population forms households in the same ways as in 2016

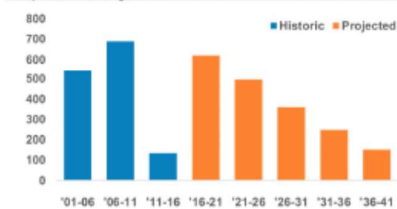
Population change

	2016-21	2021-26	2026-31	2031-36	2036-41	2016-41 (25-year change)
Population change	650	500	350	250	150	1,900
Average annual growth rate	0.8%	0.6%	0.4%	0.3%	0.2%	0.4%
Births	1,250	1,250	1,200	1,200	1,150	6,050
Deaths	550	650	700	800	850	3,550
Natural change	700	600	500	400	300	2,500
Net Migration (all)	-50	-150	-150	-150	-150	-650

Historic and Projected Population

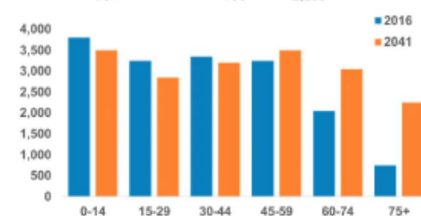


Population change



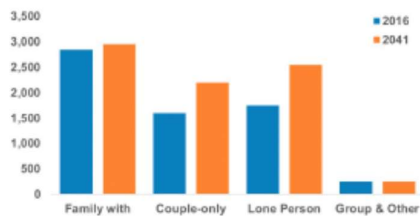
Population by Age

	2016	2041
0-14	3,800	3,500
15-29	3,250	2,850
30-44	3,350	3,200
45-59	3,250	3,500
60-74	2,050	3,050
75+	750	2,250



Households by Type

	2016	2041
Family with children	2,850	2,950
Couple-only	1,600	2,200
Lone Person	1,750	2,550
Group & Other	250	250
Total	6,450	7,950

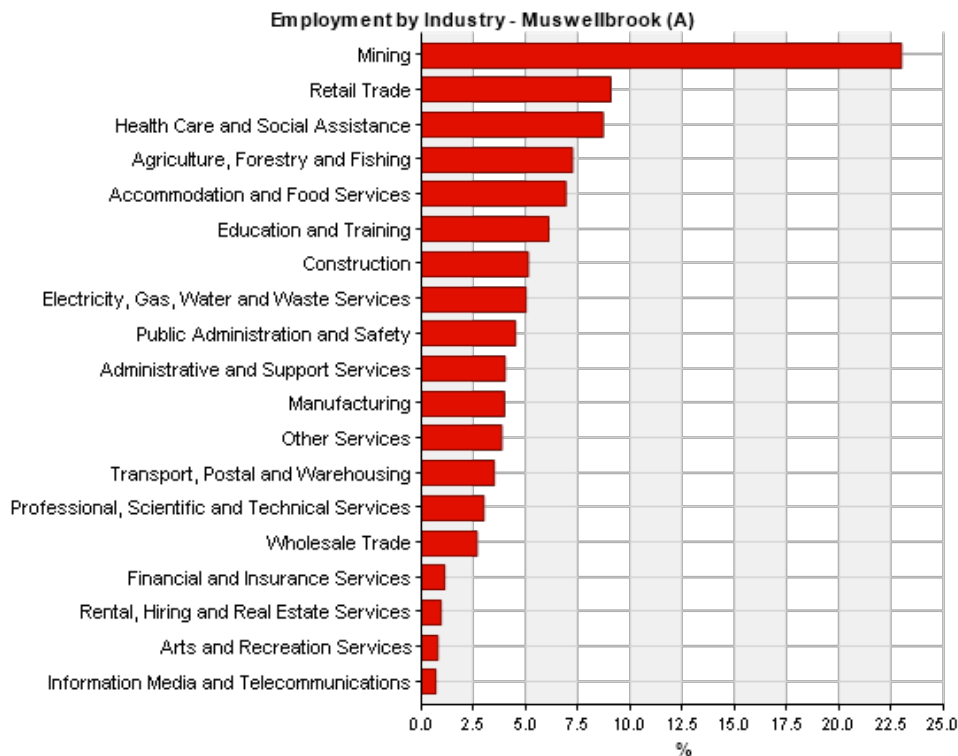


Information is rounded to the nearest 50, which can introduce discrepancies in totals and differences.

THE ECONOMY

Since non-Aboriginal settlement, the Shire has become a location for agricultural and mining activity, and the Muswellbrook township a location to access shops, services and education facilities. There were 11,364 jobs in the Shire in 2016 and this is projected to increase to approx. 13,500 jobs by 2038.

The largest industry sector of employment is “Mining”, representing 23.0% of total working residents. Many of the mining jobs available in the Shire are filled by people who reside outside the Shire.



The next two highest employment categories are retail, and health care & allied services. This reflects the role of Muswellbrook as a regional service centre that supports a wider catchment of people.

The total annual output of the Muswellbrook local government area (LGA) is estimated at \$7 billion. Revenue is primarily generated by the following industry sectors:

Mining

Coal mining commenced in the Muswellbrook Shire in the late 1800s, initially as underground mining and then, from 1944, as open cut mining. There are currently six open cut mining operations in the Shire, BHP Billiton's Mount Arthur coal mine, New Hope Mining's Bengalla, Glencore's Mangoola Coal mine, Glencore's Liddell Mine, MACH Energy's Mt Pleasant and Idemitsu's Muswellbrook Coal. An application is being consider for a new longwall underground mine (Maxwell Mine) to the south of Mt Arthur, and Dartbrook Mine, which is in care and maintenance, recently obtained approval to re-commence as a board and pillar underground mine.

Muswellbrook Coal mining operations will cease in the year 2022 and future use options for the site are being currently considering. The former Drayton Mine site is currently being rehabilitated, however infrastructure on the site, and some of the land area, are proposed to be utilised by the Maxwell Mine project. The Liddell Mine will cease mining operations in 2023.

Energy Generation

AGL Macquarie owns Liddell and Bayswater power stations. These have planned closures in 2023 and 2035 respectively. They currently employ around 600 people on a permanent basis and provide indirect employment for many more contractors for specialised work and major maintenance. The power stations generate the equivalent of 35% of the State's electricity.

AGL Macquarie has embarked on a process of long-term energy transition with decarbonisation of its energy generation assets proposed by the year 2050. As part of this decarbonisation strategy, AGL Macquarie has announced a generation plan for the Upper Hunter which includes a mix of high-efficiency gas-peakers, renewables, battery storage, efficiency upgrades at Bayswater Power Station, and investigations into the feasibility of pumped hydro energy storage.

Existing network infrastructure connects Liddell and Bayswater to the National Grid, providing the Shire with a strategic advantage to attract investment in renewable energy and storage. In recent times there have been enquiries regarding potential wind and solar energy generating facilities in the Shire. A potential emerging energy source is the use of fibre for energy. Council recently approved a research facility that is looking at methods of converting fibre to energy using biological processes.

Education

Muswellbrook is developing as the centre of educational excellence in the Upper Hunter. In 2016 the Upper Hunter Tertiary Education Centre was opened, bringing the University of Newcastle to the Region. The Centre houses TAFE and the University of Newcastle, in a range of training and industry engaged research activities. The Centre is also part of the university's 12N network of innovation hubs that aim to strengthen the links between business and research and foster an innovation culture in the region.

Sam Adams College, a joint TAFE, Council and Federal Government initiative, is providing a 63-bed student accommodation facility for the Shire and to support student accommodation needs across the Upper Hunter sub-region.

Muswellbrook Shire is home to the Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music. This organisation services the geographic area from Branxton in the South to Murrurundi in the north and Merriwa to the West and currently support music education for over 900 students. The Richard Gill School is taking enrolments for commencement in the 2021 school year. The School will focus on music and movement and STEM to allow children to learn and flourish, and it will also perform as a demonstration and training facility for teachers.

There are also several other public and private schools in the Shire.

Thoroughbred Industry

The equine industry began in the Upper Hunter Valley 150 years ago. The Hunter Valley's unique topography, soil, air, and water availability make it an ideal location for the horse breeding industry.

Muswellbrook Shire is home to the largest critical mass of thoroughbred rearing by value in Australia, located in an arc from Widden Valley through Sandy Hollow to Jerry's Plains. The equine industry is a significant employer alongside other agriculture, including dairy, beef and cropping. Land use

certainty is a significant concern for the equine and agricultural sector associated with the environmental impacts from the proximity of coal mines to these industries.

Viticulture Industry

Land use conflict has played a role in the Upper Hunter viticulture industry, with significant reductions in operations since its peak in the 1980s. The remaining industry is small but internationally renowned for the quality and quantity of wine production and processing, and as a wine tourism destination. The earliest evidence of grape growing in the Upper Hunter dates back to 1860 when vines were planted at the meeting of Wybong Creek and the Goulburn River. Land use certainty is also a priority for this sector. The proximity of coal mines to vineyards continues to concern the industry due to potential air quality and water security impacts.

Food and Fibre Industries

Beef and dairy farming, fodder production and egg and chicken farming activities are common in the Shire. Dairy farm numbers have declined in recent times due to structural changes in the industry. They are mostly located on river flats where irrigation allows more consistent fodder production.

A strong dairy, beef and fodder industry requires ongoing access to irrigable land. Significant land with potential for irrigation is owned by coal mine companies as buffers to coal mines. There is growing momentum to identify key buffer lands for productive agricultural use.

A potential emerging industry is the growth of fibre for energy. In addition to the proven technology of incinerating waste for energy, Council recently approved a research facility that is looking at methods of converting fibre to energy using biological processes. Future rehabilitation of mine sites may provide further sites for planting fast growing plants for energy production.

LOCAL STRATEGIC VISION

A Community in Transition - Muswellbrook will have a more sustainable community, environment and economy through diversification.

The Vision will be achieved by the Shire becoming:

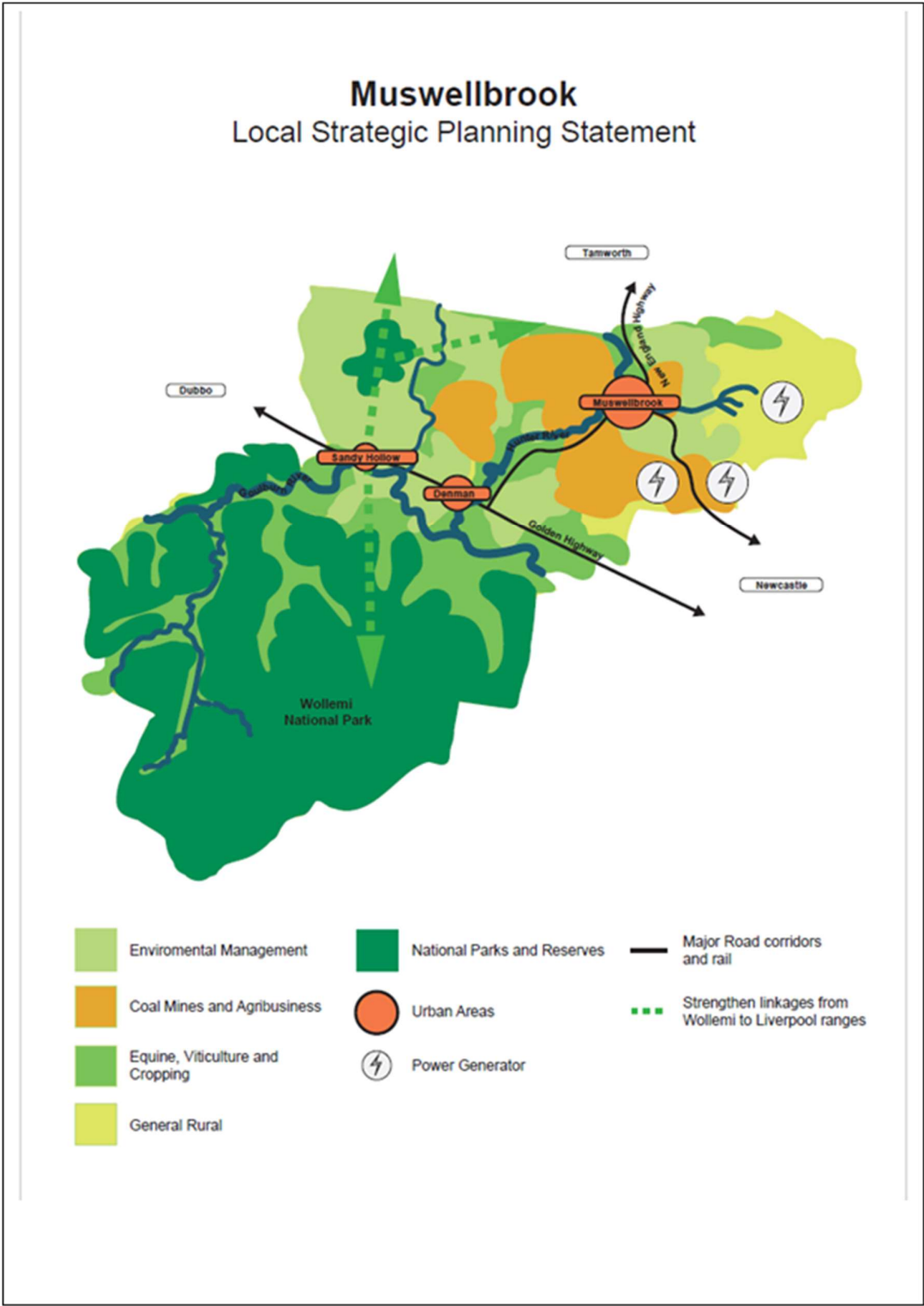
- The State's major innovative energy centre.
- One of the State's major food bowls, through large scale food production and processing (agribusiness).
- A major regional location for tertiary education services.
- A leading location for equine industries.
- A location of significance for the viticulture industry.
- A diverse visitor economy.
- A place that celebrates its natural heritage, landscapes and biodiversity, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage; and
- A Regional Centre with higher order services and facilities, including aged care, diverse housing opportunities and entertainment facilities.
- A mix of desirable places and communities in which to live.

THEMES, PLANNING PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

The Vision will be delivered through identified Themes, Planning Priorities and Actions. The Three Themes are:

- Opportunities for creativity, jobs and investment
- Improved wellbeing, safety and belonging
- Enhanced environment, natural assets and scenic qualities

The Structure Plan below shows how the Vision would be expected to be delivered spatially:



The more valuable agricultural land adjoins the Hunter River, Goulburn River and numerous waterways that reach into the Wollemi National Park area in the southern half of the Shire. The mining and power generating activities are in the northern half of the Shire.

The NSW Government recently released its *Strategic Statement on Coal Exploration and Mining in NSW* which aims to provide greater certainty to explorers, investors, industry stakeholders and communities about the future of coal mining in the state. Unfortunately, it indicates the whole of the Shire is available for coal exploration and mining. Council will continue to advocate that new mining activities are not approved in valuable agricultural and environmental areas. New quarry activity may be acceptable in agricultural and environmental areas provided they are well planned and implement strong environmental controls.

The restoration of vegetation along waterways in rural locations is expected to improve amenity and perception of the Shire. While this is the location of the more productive agricultural activities combining both can improve agricultural productivity and contribute to amenity.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CREATIVITY, JOBS AND INVESTMENT

Planning Priority 1: Our Shire embraces technology and innovation.

Council supports leading edge businesses growing and consolidating in Muswellbrook Shire as a mechanism toward supporting the Shire's transition to broader employment diversification.

The Planning Principles that we will apply when making decisions:

- Growth and investment in equine, viticulture and dairy industries is supported.
- Parallel growth in support industries and activities such as fodder production, veterinary services, horse racing and training, hospitality and experiential tourism is encouraged.
- The production and distribution of sustainable energy will continue in the Shire, with a shift to alternative renewable energies such as wind, biomass, gas, solar, geothermal and pumped hydro sources.
- Muswellbrook continues to generate and distribute energy to the Region and State through adaptive reuse of the existing infrastructure.
- We will employ technology and innovative techniques to engage the community.

Actions	Timeframe
Council will work with NSW Water, and other stakeholders, to achieve strategies for drought proofing and ensuring water security to enable the Shire's economic and employment transition and supports the investment in agri-business.	Ongoing
Council will identify potential locations for establishment of food processing facilities utilising the strong local workforce and capitalising on local infrastructure and transport networks.	Short-term
Local planning instruments will be reviewed to introduce flexibility to allow for low impact, technology-based businesses and industries to locate in the Shire.	Short-term
Council, with input from state agencies, will complete base level planning for a range of food production facilities, which meet industry needs for secure water supply, biosecurity, environmental management and support infrastructure identified.	Medium-term
Council will prepare a Digital Community Strategy.	long-term

Planning Priority 2: We plan for the transition of mine and power station sites before their closure.

Mines and power stations occupy large tracts of land with infrastructure and topography that would be suitable for alternative uses over time, to replace employment opportunities that may not exist in the future.

The Planning Principles that we will apply when making decisions:

- Council will support rehabilitation of coal mining and power station land to achieve land uses identified in closure plans and rehabilitation plans, to provide opportunities for agricultural/horticultural production, bio-diversity habitat, agribusiness, food processing, industrial, tourism, recreation and enhancement of scenic landscape values (existing and desired) of the Shire.
- Council will encourage the retention of the labour intensity of lands formerly associated with mining and power station, as far as possible.

Actions	Timeframe
Council will be an active participant in the planning and transition of Liddell Power Station to a range of employment opportunities.	Short-term
Council will be an active participant in the planning and transition of Muswellbrook Coal Mine to a range of employment opportunities.	Short-term
Council will commission a study to identify the measures of success for best practice mine and power station closures.	Short-term
Council is an active participant in the planning and transition of Bayswater Power Station to a range of employment opportunities.	long-term
Council will be an active participant in the planning and transition of Dartbrook and Mangoola Coal Mines to a range of employment and housing opportunities.	long-term

Planning Priority 3: The mineral resource and power generation industry is productive, accountable and considerate of surrounding land uses.

Coal mining, river sand extraction and quarrying for hard rock and shale are major components of the economy of the Shire. The two coal fired power stations are expected to close long-term, but new power generating activities, such as wind, solar, pumped hydro and biofuels are expected to be commissioned. Groups from the mining, quarrying and agricultural and visitor economy sectors have expressed a desire for certainty on the location of these different activities, enabling more confidence in investment decisions. Many of these activities are classed as State Significant Development (SSD) but Council has a strong role in advocating for appropriate land use planning decisions by the State Agencies.

The Planning Principles that we will apply when making decisions:

- Council will encourage the location and maximum extent of coal extraction areas to be identified in state and local planning strategies and planning instruments to provide certainty for agricultural uses.
- Council will not support coal extraction from areas that would compromise activities on strategic agricultural land, or where the development would fragment critical industry clusters or significant ecological corridors.

Actions	Timeframe
Council will advocate for updates to state and local planning instruments to encourage coal mines and quarries to maintain buffers to equine, viticulture operations and other critical industry clusters.	Ongoing

Planning Priority 4: Important agricultural land is protected.

A key issue for rural areas is protecting important agricultural land for agricultural production, managing competing interests for that land and avoiding conflicts that discourage investment in agricultural production.

The Planning Principles that we will apply when making decisions:

- Council will encourage the use of irrigable land for growing crops and pasture.
- Fragmentation of agricultural land will be avoided by setting appropriate lot sizes consistent with the economics of local and regional production systems.
- Productive and potentially productive rural land will be appropriately zoned to be protect from adverse impacts.
- Land capability and suitability will be considered when making land use planning decisions.
- The value of less productive land will be recognised for its role in accommodating infrastructure and agricultural that is less reliant on high quality soils and irrigation.
- Local development on important agricultural land will be required to retain existing agricultural productivity.
- Council will encourage mining, quarrying and power generation activities to minimise impacts on agricultural production.
- Non-agricultural local development will be required to incorporate buffers to reduce impacts on agricultural activities.

Actions	Timeframe
Muswellbrook LEP 2009 will be reviewed to introduce an RU2 Rural Landscape zone, with the RU1 Primary Production zone to apply to agricultural land suitable for equine, viticulture and dairy activities.	Short-term
Strategic agricultural land and associated water sources suitable for equine, viticulture and dairy activities will be identified in a Rural and Agricultural Lands Study and Policy prepared for the Shire.	Medium-term
Council will utilise the Rural and Agricultural Lands Study and Policy to identify key rural and environmental character areas in local planning instruments.	Long-term

Planning Priority 5: Land uses in rural areas are protected from incompatible land uses and supporting industries are encouraged.

The diverse nature of agricultural land in the Shire lends itself to a mix of agricultural industries that leverage off each other and the rural character and amenity of the area. The Shire's proximity to major transport infrastructure also presents opportunities for growth and diversification of the agricultural sector.

The Planning Principles that we will apply when making decisions:

- A wide range of general farming activity is encouraged to operate across the rural landscape with minimal conflict from residential uses.
- Rural lands are protected from encroachment by industrial and agribusiness uses by encouraging these uses in mine and power station buffer and rehabilitation areas, where possible.
- A critical mass of support services will be maintained through the retention of agricultural land and continued access to the agricultural supply chain.
- The biosecurity risks of new local development on agriculture will be addressed.

Actions	Timeframe
Council will support pre-existing, lawfully operating agricultural land uses in the case of nuisance complaints, consistent with the NSW Right to Farm Policy.	Ongoing
Local planning instruments be reviewed to ensure objectives and controls are sufficiently robust to protect important agricultural activities and areas from inappropriate development.	Short-term
Muswellbrook LEP 2009 will be reviewed to introduce an RU2 Rural Landscape zone to identify locations suited for support services that do not require access to high value agricultural land, and to protect the scenic landscapes adjoining the equine and viticulture critical industry clusters.	Short-term
Local planning instruments will be reviewed to introduce effective buffer distances to protect existing and potential rural land uses from incompatible development.	medium-term
Council will prepare a Rural and Agricultural Lands Study and Policy investigate the viability of new and emerging agri-businesses to support diversification of the sector.	Medium-term

Planning Priority 6: A variety of niche tourism opportunities are encouraged.

Increasing the number of things people can do in their leisure time when they live in or visit the Shire will help diversify the economy and improve the liveability of the area. It is expected that tourism visitation in the Shire may be increased through a focus on nature-based experiences in local National Parks and nature reserves, wineries, rehabilitated mine sites, artificial water bodies, such as Lake Liddell, the equine industry and the regional facilities of Muswellbrook.

The Planning Principles that we will apply when making decisions:

- Council will seek to increase investment in tourism services and infrastructure.
- The local tourism experience will be broadened to include experiential activity such as National Parks, and insight of local major industries (mining and horse breeding).
- Tourism activities are to be compatible with the rural and scenic character of the precinct in which they are proposed.
- Local businesses and produce will be promoted as part of the visitor experience of the Upper Hunter.

Actions	Timeframe
Local planning instruments will be reviewed to ensure that there is flexibility for a wide range of tourism related activities in the Shire.	Short-term
Muswellbrook LEP 2009 will be reviewed to introduce an RU2 Rural Landscape zone to identify locations suited for support services that do not require access to high value agricultural land, and to protect the scenic landscape adjoining the equine and viticulture industry clusters.	Short-term
A Rural and Agricultural Lands Study and Policy will be prepared for the Shire's key rural and environmental character areas.	Medium-term
Council will actively engage with the National Parks and Wildlife Service to open a northern access to and promote visitation to the Wollemi National Park.	Medium-term
Council will utilise the Rural and Agricultural Lands Study and Policy to identify key rural and environmental character areas in local planning instruments.	Long-term

Planning Priority 7: Industrial land is developed in an orderly manner, which meets future needs, and is provided with appropriate infrastructure.

Having vacant industrial land available provides opportunities for new and emerging industries. Current employment opportunities in the Shire are strongly focused toward mining; more diversification is necessary to limit future shocks expected in that sector. Preparation of an Economic Development Strategy would identify the type of land and infrastructure required for future businesses.

The Planning Principles that we will apply when making decisions:

- Rural, mining and general industrial support services are available to the local community in well located and structured industrial areas.
- Greater land use diversity will be encouraged in employment zones.
- Industries that implement sustainable energy generation and supply will be encouraged.
- Infrastructure is provided to encourage business investment
- Industrial land is protected from encroachment of incompatible land uses.

Actions	Timeframe
The availability of land for industry is monitored through updating the Muswellbrook Urban Development Program.	Ongoing
Council will continue to invest in its Future Fund and Economic Development programs to encourage diversification of industries, economic opportunities and employment in the Shire.	Ongoing
The Mine Affected Roads Strategy will be reviewed and updated as necessary.	Ongoing
Council will review local planning instruments to ensure there is flexibility for industry, agribusiness and sustainable energy generation to be established in the buffers to mine and power stations sites, and as transition uses.	Short-term
Council will prepare an infrastructure plan to guide investment in infrastructure that will support a wide range of agribusiness, mining and industrial activity.	Medium-term
Council will prepare an Economic Development Strategy	Medium-term

Planning Priority 8: Our Town Centres and Villages are places of economic growth, business diversification and employment opportunities.

Council's vision is that Muswellbrook will strengthen and grow as the Regional Centre of the Upper Hunter, and as a centre for:

- Excellence for education;
- Retail, commercial, educational, cultural, arts, entertainment, and residential development;
- Sport and recreation;
- Supporting the mining, agribusiness and agricultural sectors.

Denman will continue to develop as a significant District Centre with a distinctive lifestyle for residents, and providing:

- A major destination for rural tourism focused on the adjacent Wollemi National Park, Manobalai Nature Reserve and the wine and equine industries; and
- As a 'Gateway' to western NSW.

Other villages and localities will continue to play a role in being a focus for community activity and identity.

The Planning Principles that we will apply when making decisions:

- Our commercial centres will have a logical hierarchy that reflects the catchments they serve;
- Mixed-use development will be supported close to the Muswellbrook business centre where there is genuine prospect of integrating retail and business uses with residential development;
- Tourism and visitor related activities are encouraged in Muswellbrook, Denman and Sandy Hollow;
- Muswellbrook will continue to fulfil its role as the health and medical centre of the Upper Hunter by maintaining the high-quality District Base Hospital services, supplemented with private health facilities;
- There will be substantial investment in educational facilities and programs which integrate with the Shire's economic and employment transition;
- Private health and wellbeing facilities are encouraged to establish in the main centres of Muswellbrook and Denman.
- Developments that increase economic activity, activation of public areas, and improve amenity in Muswellbrook, Denman and Sandy Hollow will be supported;
- Investment in streetscape and public domain improvements will be encouraged to attract private investment;
- Proposals for out-of-centre commercial development will not be supported without comprehensive economic assessment demonstrating substantial community benefit and without adverse impact on existing industrial and commercial precincts;

- Major employment anchors in or near Muswellbrook and Denman will be encouraged.

Actions	Timeframe
Local planning instruments will be reviewed to increase opportunities for new mixed-use development outcomes in line with the Muswellbrook Town Centre Strategy.	Short-term
Local planning instruments will be reviewed to implement the Muswellbrook Town Centre Strategy to guide future development in Muswellbrook Central Business District, including plans for a purpose-built civic services precinct.	Short-term
Local planning instruments will be modified to facilitate Denman's development as a district centre, with a well-defined town centre and public facilities servicing the needs of local and visitors.	Short-term
Muswellbrook LEP will be reviewed to align zones and zone objectives of centres to reflect their role in the regional hierarchy.	Short-term
Muswellbrook LEP will be reviewed to ensure the extent of B2, B3, B4 and B7 zones reflect the demand for appropriately zoned land.	Short-term
Council will adopt a local freight access plan for the Muswellbrook town centre to allow for the efficient movement of freight whilst protecting urban amenity and freight access.	Medium-term
Investigations will occur to identify an appropriate location for a Highway Service Centre, with direct access to the town, to support the needs of the travelling public, provide employment opportunities and to enable the Muswellbrook community to promote itself to future visitors when the Muswellbrook Bypass is constructed.	Long-term

IMPROVED WELLBEING, SAFETY AND BELONGING

Planning Priority 9: Housing is diverse, adaptable and affordable, and our urban areas facilitate affordable living.

The Shire will provide opportunities for growth in housing, including a greater mix of housing types to cater for the needs of different households.

The Planning Principles that we will apply when making decisions:

- Medium density housing is encouraged in locations that are in walking distance to the Muswellbrook town centre, the Muswellbrook Railway Station, and neighbourhood shops in Rutherford Road, Muswellbrook, or the Denman village centre;
- There will be a wider choice of housing types in the Shire, to meet the needs of all residents including seniors, first time buyers, itinerant workforce, students and visitors to the area;
- Pedestrian facility improvements are prioritised in the Muswellbrook town centre, Denman village centre and Sandy Hollow village centre;
- Additional residential urban release areas are only provided where it is demonstrated that existing supply will not meet a ten-year demand;
- The development pattern, scale and sequencing of urban release areas will be planned to integrate with infrastructure availability.

Actions	Timeframe
The availability of land for housing is monitored through updating the Muswellbrook Urban Development Program.	Ongoing
Local planning instruments are reviewed to permit medium density housing, such as shop top housing, in and around the B2 Local Centre zone, B3 Commercial Core zone, and B4 Mixed Use zone.	Short-term
Local planning instruments are reviewed to introduce an R2 Low Density Residential zone in areas beyond a walkable distance of regular public transport routes or shopping facilities.	Short-term
Council will complete a Local Housing Strategy, to replace the current Residential and Rural Residential Strategy, to analyse housing needs, preferences and challenges, identifies social and affordable housing requirements for the Shire, and determines the feasibility of different types of housing.	Medium-term

Planning Priority 10: The character and vitality of our Town Centre and Villages is protected and enhanced.

The results of community surveys indicate that the appearance of urban areas is important to creating a sense of place and pride, contributing to belonging and attracting people to live in the area. The heritage of the Shire helps with feelings that the Shire has purpose, permanence and longevity. It is important that new development doesn't detract from the character and heritage of the Shire.

The Planning Principles that we will apply when making decisions:

- Town and village centre enhancements are consistent with Council's endorsed strategies, master plans, and public domain plans;
- New development delivers improvements identified in Council's endorsed strategies, master plans, and public domain plans where work occurs in the public domain;
- Private development and public investment improve pedestrian connections between the Marketplace development and the Muswellbrook main street;
- Pedestrians are prioritised in our town and village centres;
- Enhanced urban greenery is encouraged to address heat island effects and predicted climate change impacts;
- The public domain is used for community events and celebrations.

Actions	Timeframe
Council will continue to advocate for a vehicular bypass of the Muswellbrook town centre and provide input to planning of the bypass.	Ongoing
Council will prioritise projects for funding from the Local Heritage Fund program that deliver façade and signage improvements for heritage buildings in centres.	Ongoing
Council will identify priorities and seek funding for public domain improvements and urban tree planting.	Ongoing
Council will review local planning instruments to be consistent with Council's endorsed strategies, master plans, and public domain plans for Muswellbrook, Denman and Sandy Hollow.	Short-term
Council will review local planning instruments to improve guidance on the expected design outcomes for new local development near heritage items and places.	Short-term
Council will undertake a parking and access Strategy for Muswellbrook town centre and Denman village centre.	Medium-term.

Planning Priority 11: Our Community is safe, healthy and active.

The planning of our communities and provision of infrastructure allows people to live healthy, active lives in a supportive, inclusive community environment.

The Planning Principles that we will apply when making decisions:

- Noise pollution and air quality is improved to benefit the health of people living in the Shire;
- Urban Areas and public spaces are designed in accordance with the principles of Crime Prevention Through Urban Design (CPTED) and place-making;
- Pedestrian movement is supported in our town and village centres;
- Residential areas and urban employment nodes are connected to recreational areas, shopping centres and other key nodes by active transport routes and public transport;
- Well-designed shade, both natural and built, is provided in public infrastructure projects and private development, such as, public buildings and town centre upgrades, public domain improvements, recreation facilities and commercial development that adjoins public places.
- Urban areas are modified over time to promote inclusivity and accessibility.
- Council will work with School Infrastructure NSW to provide joint or shared use facilities with public schools where appropriate.

Actions	Timeframe
Local planning instruments are reviewed to ensure buffers between potentially conflicting land uses are adequate when new development is considered.	Ongoing
Council will seek support from state agencies to modify licences/approved air and noise pollution limits for existing development to lessen health impacts on the community. Particularly, Council will advocate for cumulative impact air-quality conditions to be imposed on all mining activity in the Shire.	On-going
Council will review local planning instruments to promote medium density housing in and around the town and village centres, near the Muswellbrook railway station and along major road corridors that are supported by public transport and active transport infrastructure.	Short-term

Actions	Timeframe
Council will review the DCP and engineering guidelines to ensure they support active transport principles.	Short-term
<p>Council will review development contribution plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to incorporate active transport infrastructure. • to include requirements for public domain, transport and other infrastructure works required to support public schools in the LGA. 	Short-term
Council will investigate options for a cycleway and trail between Denman and Merriwa.	Medium-term
Council will prepare a Greener Places Policy and updated Street Tree Planting guidelines.	Medium-term
<p>Council will review the DCP and Engineering Design specifications to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) incorporate design considerations regarding the provision of well-designed shade, with reference to the latest shade guidelines; b) require well-designed shade in any private buildings or developments that adjoin public places that are likely to have significant visitation (e.g. high pedestrian traffic or people visiting or pausing in public spaces); c) require the provision of well-designed shade in recreation facilities; d) require the provision of well-designed shade in the design of any public infrastructure; e) require the consideration of the benefits of shade in any application to remove trees or vegetation currently providing significant shade and communicate to residents the benefits of shade; and f) encourage the provision of well-chosen and well-placed street trees in residential or public domain developments. 	Medium-term

Planning Priority 12: Urban development is focused in areas with existing infrastructure and new infrastructure and services required for urban growth is appropriately funded.

It is Council's aim that the provision of infrastructure ensures households in new housing areas can live affordably and with a good quality of life.

The Planning Principles that we will apply when making decisions:

- Infrastructure required to support urban development is provided or upgraded;
- The spare capacity of existing services and infrastructure is utilised;
- Infrastructure needs are determined and costed prior to additional urban release areas being zoned;
- The cost of the provision of infrastructure in urban release areas is provided by land developers through mechanisms such as contribution plans;
- Rezoning land for urban purposes is prioritised in areas where existing infrastructure capacity exists;
- Recreation and community facilities are located close to residential areas and are provided with strong active transport connections.
- The freight transport network is protected from encroachment by sensitive land uses.

Actions	Timeframe
Council will review development contribution plans to create contemporary documents with an updated schedule of works.	Short-term
Local planning instruments will be updated to protect the Muswellbrook Hospital helicopter airspace in accordance with National Airports Safeguarding Framework <i>Guideline H – Protection Strategically Important Helicopter Landing Sites</i> .	Short-term
Council will prepare an infrastructure plan to guide investment in infrastructure that will support an expansion of residential, commercial/retail, agribusiness, and industrial activity.	Medium-term
Local planning instruments will be updated to reflect requirements of the NSW Freight and Ports Plan 2018-2023 and the NSW Heavy Vehicle Access Policy Framework.	Medium-term

Actions	Timeframe
Council will work with TfNSW to consider the need and location of additional heavy vehicle rest areas along the New England Highway and Golden Highway.	Long-term
Local planning instruments will be updated to maintain or improve the integrity of the State road network through inclusion of access restrictions and alternative local road access.	Long-term

Planning Priority 13: Opportunities for rural, large lot and environmental living are provided in appropriate locations.

The Shire will provide opportunities for growth in housing, including a greater mix of housing types to cater for the needs of different households. Efforts will be made to replace rural, large lot and environmental living opportunities that have been removed as open cut mining operations have been approved in the Shire.

The Planning Principles that we will apply when making decisions:

- Rural residential living opportunities will be provided for in planned estates, or in limited, dispersed subdivisions, in a way that ensures minimal conflict with general agricultural activities and open cut mining operations;
- The subdivision of land for large lot residential purposes will only be supported where services and infrastructure exist (e.g. water, sewer) or these utilities can reasonably be extended or provided;
- The subdivision of land for environmental living may be supported in areas without services provided there are no adverse environmental outcomes;
- High quality agricultural land, and land with high biodiversity values will be protected and effective buffers provided;
- Dwellings located in rural areas and areas of high environmental value are sited and designed to minimise visual impact.

Actions	Timeframe
The availability of land for housing is monitored through the Muswellbrook Urban Development Program.	Ongoing
Council will review minimum lot sizes and zones for the “soldier settler lots” in Giants Creek Road, Sandy Hollow, as a means of providing environmental living and large lots to replace similar lots lost to mining activities in other parts of the Shire, subject to consideration of mining proposals.	Short-term
The Muswellbrook Residential and Rural Residential Strategy will be reviewed and replaced with a Local Housing Strategy.	Medium-term
Council will assess the suitability of land in the vicinity of Wybong Hall for environmental living and large lots to replace similar lots removed by mining activities in that locality.	Medium-term

Actions	Timeframe
Council will assess the suitability of land in the vicinity of Pamger Drive, Muswellbrook, for environmental living lots to expand the range of this housing types in the Shire.	Long-term

Planning Priority 14: Our Aboriginal and Non- Aboriginal cultural heritage is protected and celebrated.

Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal cultural heritage and identity in the Shire is diverse. Council is committed to protecting and celebrating our cultural heritage.

The Planning Principles that we will apply when making decisions:

- Aboriginal cultural heritage is respected as a fundamental part of our identity;
- There is a strong collaborative relationship between Council and the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to explore and protect the diverse heritage values of the Shire;
- Aboriginal objects, places and ancestral remains, living, traditional or historical practices, representations, expressions, beliefs, knowledge or skills and the associated environment, landscapes and materials that Aboriginal people recognise as part of their culture and identity, are recognised in the Shire's planning controls and land use decisions;
- Innovative approaches to adaptive re-use of heritage places and buildings will be supported;
- New development that complements the heritage and character of precincts will be supported.

Actions	Timeframe
Council will identify new heritage items for inclusion in the LEP and update inventories and information on current and proposed heritage items.	Ongoing.
An amended Thematic History for the Shire is completed to assist with the identification of items, places and stories that have value, to aid planning decisions and provide recommendation amendments to Local planning instruments.	Medium-term
Council will investigate the feasibility of an Aboriginal Cultural Centre to understand and celebrate Aboriginal culture of the Shire.	Medium-term
An Aboriginal Heritage Management Study is prepared	Long-term
Following the update of the Thematic History and preparation of an Aboriginal Heritage Management Strategy, local planning instruments will be reviewed to identify key heritage	Long-term

Actions	Timeframe
places and clusters and ensure cultural items and landscapes are managed appropriately.	
Council will identify funding and resourcing for Aboriginal and Historic heritage priorities and develop plans and strategies which interpret, celebrate and promote Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal identity, culture and heritage.	Long-term
Council will prepare a Trails Strategy, incorporating walking and mountain bike trails in the Shire to enable people to experience the Cultural Heritage, Natural Environment and scenic values of the Shire.	Long-term

ENHANCED ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL ASSETS AND SCENIC QUALITIES

Planning Priority 15: We protect and enhance land and habitats of environmental value and strengthen and protect biodiversity corridors.

Guidance on the management of areas with high environmental value in the Shire is currently provided at a regional level. Current local planning instruments do not contain vegetation management requirements. With the introduction of the Biodiversity Conservation Act and the broadening of the role of Stewardship sites to manage biodiversity impacts, there is a need to have a guidance framework based on local knowledge, data and mapping. Biodiversity corridors play an important role in the maintenance of species diversity, to limit the impacts of habitat loss, fragmentation and bushfire on migration, breeding and feeding for a range of plants and animals. The restoration of vegetation along waterways and in urban and rural locations more broadly is expected to improve amenity and perception of the Shire.

The Planning Principles that we will apply when making decisions:

- Natural Assets and land of high environmental value are identified and protected from human activities;
- Areas of significant biodiversity value, and current and future biodiversity corridors, are conserved;
- The impacts of Planning Proposals and Development Applications on biodiversity corridors and values will be considered early in the planning process and guide the planning of the development or activity.

Actions	Timeframe
Land uses in the corridor between Wollemi National Park and the Liverpool Ranges will be encouraged to minimise clearing and to encourage new planting to establish corridors.	Ongoing
Council will review Local planning instruments to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure objectives and land uses permissible in environmental zones is appropriate to the value of the land; and• Encourage rehabilitation or protection of riparian corridors.	Short-term
Council will undertake an Environmental Lands Study to identify areas of significant vegetation, high potential for establishment of biodiversity corridors, high scenic value, unstable landforms and waterways.	Medium-term

Actions	Timeframe
<p>Council will review the DCP to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide vegetation management provisions; • Updated guidance on plant species suitable for planting in urban and rural locations of the Shire; and • Introduce buffer distances to environmental land to protect from incompatible development and activities. 	Medium-term
Council will review Local planning instruments to protect high value environmental and scenic areas identified in the Environmental Lands Study.	Long-term
Council will prepare a Greener Places policy.	Long-term

Planning Priority 16: Natural and rural landscapes are retained and enhanced.

The landscape of the Shire includes Mountain Ranges, National Parks, vineyards and horse studs. The aesthetic qualities of the Shire contribute to a sense of place, lifestyle and wellbeing, and economic activity, primarily through the visitor economy.

The Planning Principles that we will apply when making decisions:

- The landscape values of land outside urban areas, particularly land adjoining transport routes, will be managed to provide a rural experience for visitors, potential wildlife corridors and a barrier to movement of airborne particulate matter from mining and agricultural activities;
- Areas of high scenic value are mapped to allow for their protection and enhancement;
- Dwellings located in areas of high scenic value are sited and designed to minimise visual impacts.

Actions	Timeframe
Council will undertake an Environmental Lands Study to identify areas of significant vegetation, high scenic value, and waterways.	Medium-term
Significant rural landscapes will be identified in a Rural and Agricultural Lands Study and Policy prepared for the Shire.	Medium-term
Council will review local planning instruments to investigate options to include scenic protection controls that implement outcomes of the Environmental Lands Study and Rural and Agricultural Lands Study and Policy.	Medium-term

Planning Priority 17: We rehabilitate waterways, improve water quality and water security.

The Shire contains numerous waterways, but due to farming, forestry, mining and urban activities, many are in a degraded condition with minimal habitat value and less than desired water quality. Healthy waterways provide many environmental, economic and social benefits.

Water security is anticipated to be critical to encourage new agribusinesses and to support urban growth.

The Planning Principles that we will apply when making decisions:

- Important waterways are identified, and riparian corridors revegetated and protected;
- The amount of waste entering our waterways is reduced;
- Erosion of the bed and banks of waterways is minimised;
- Water saving measures are implemented and water detention is planned in urban areas;
- The naturalisation of urban stormwater systems is to occur where possible.

Actions	Timeframe
Council will review Local planning instruments to ensure best practice water sensitive urban design and stormwater management standards are in place.	Ongoing.
Council will apply for grant funding to restore waterways, naturalise urban stormwater systems and to fund projects that improve water security.	Ongoing
Council will prepare a strategy to improve and/or naturalise watercourses, drainage channels and their urban catchments.	Short-term
Council will undertake an Environmental Lands Study to identify significant waterways outside urban areas.	Medium-term
Council will implement a strategic water sampling program to monitor long-term water quality condition changes.	Medium-term
An updated On-site Sewerage Management (OSSM) Strategy is prepared.	Medium-term

Planning Priority 18: We adapt to climate change and build climate and hazard resilience.

The region is predicted to experience changes in the severity and frequency of storms, floods, bushfires, heatwaves and drought as a result of climate change. The NSW Government, through the Climate Change Policy Framework, has set NSW the target of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. The Shire needs to contribute to mitigation and adaptation measures consistent with State Policy.

The Planning Principles that we will apply when making decisions:

- Renewable energy generation is encouraged;
- Our urban areas are kept compact to encourage active and passive modes of transport that reduce CO₂ emissions;
- Climate change adaptation is promoted and considered in land use planning;
- Resource consumption and waste generation is reduced;
- The impact of climate change and climate related hazards are considered at all stages in the planning process.
- Land use, development and infrastructure decisions will not increase the population at risk or the demand on Emergency Services personnel and volunteers.

Actions	Timeframe
The Muswellbrook Climate Change Risk Assessment 2019 is reviewed and updated on a regular basis.	ongoing
Local planning instruments are reviewed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure development controls improve building performance and include sustainable development initiatives;• Encourage investment in renewable energy projects and infrastructure; and• Require a reduction in resource consumption and waste generation.• Ensure hazard planning and disaster resilience requirements for new development are contemporary. This includes implementing recommendations of the Hunter River Flood and Risk Plan Management 2018 and updated bushfire hazard mapping.	Short-term
Council will undertake a local adaptation plan to manage the impacts of climate change on temperature and heatwaves.	Long-term

Planning Priority 19: Development is suitable for the location, minimises environmental impact and responds to environmental characteristics.

It is important that human activities occur in a way that minimises impacts on the environment and are located to avoid environmental hazards.

The Planning Principles that we will apply when making decisions:

- The sustainable use of resources is preferred;
- Technology that assists in the sustainable use of resources is encouraged;
- Opportunities to capture and reuse stormwater and wastewater are maximised;
- Urban development on land with significant environmental hazards will not be supported;
- Urban Release Areas and sensitive used such as aged care, childcare, hospitals and schools will not be supported on flood prone land;
- Rehabilitation of degraded and contaminated land occurs in a timely manner.

Actions	Timeframe
The Muswellbrook Climate Change Risk Assessment 2019 is reviewed and updated on a regular basis.	ongoing
Council will request the minimisation of final landform voids resulting from mining and quarrying activity.	on-going
Council will develop best practice guidelines for rehabilitation of mine, quarry and power generation sites.	short-term
Council will implement the recommendations in the Hunter River Flood Study and Risk Management Plan 2018.	medium-term
Public access to flood information is improved and provided on-line.	medium-term

IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REPORTING

The LSPS will support the Community Strategic Plan and will be reviewed concurrently with the Community Strategic Plan every 4 years.

The Actions provided under each of the Planning Priorities will align with, and inform, Council's 4-year Delivery Program and 1-year Operational Plan. The horizon of longer-term actions means their delivery is subject to potential unknown factors (internal and external). More certainty will occur over time, which will inform future revisions.

Any amendments or alterations to longer-term actions will be reflected in future Delivery Programs and Operational Plans.

The timeframes for implementation are defined as follows:

Short Term 0-3 Years

Medium Term 4-8 Years

Long Term 8+ Years

Ongoing - actions that will continue to be implemented for the lifespan of the LSPS.

Appendix 1 - LSPS and the Community Strategic Plan goals alignment.

LSPS Theme	Community Strategic Plan Goals	LSPS Planning Priorities
Opportunities for creativity, jobs and investment	<p>1: Support job growth</p> <p>2: Diversify economy, facilitate the development of intensive agriculture and other growth industries, make the Shire a more attractive place to invest and do business.</p> <p>3: Facilitate greater access to higher education and participation in the knowledge and creative economy.</p> <p>4: Develop Muswellbrook as a regional centre.</p>	<p>1: Our Shire embraces technology and innovation.</p> <p>2: We plan for the transition of mine and power station sites before and after their closure.</p> <p>3: The mineral resource and power generation industry is productive, accountable and considerate of surrounding land uses.</p> <p>4: Important agricultural land is protected.</p> <p>5: Land uses in rural areas are protected from incompatible land uses and supporting industries are encouraged.</p> <p>6: A variety of niche tourism opportunities are encouraged.</p> <p>7: Industrial land is developed in an orderly manner, which meets future needs and is provided with appropriate infrastructure.</p> <p>8: Our Town Centre and Villages are places of economic growth, business diversification and employment opportunities.</p>
Improved wellbeing, safety and belonging	<p>5: Continue to improve the affordability, liveability and amenity of the Shire's communities.</p> <p>9: Facilitate opportunities to expand seniors living.</p>	<p>9: Housing is diverse, adaptable and affordable and our urban areas facilitate affordable living.</p> <p>10: The character and vitality of our Town Centre and Villages is protected and enhanced.</p>

	<p>16: Conserve the heritage and history of the Shire.</p> <p>19: Our community's infrastructure is planned well, is safe and reliable, and provides required levels of service.</p> <p>21: The roads, footpath and cycleway networks are integrated and allow for the safe movement of residents around the Shire.</p>	<p>11: Our Community is safe, healthy and active.</p> <p>12: Urban development is focussed in areas with existing infrastructure or new infrastructure and services required for urban growth is appropriately funded.</p> <p>13: Opportunities for rural, large lot and environmental living are provided in appropriate locations.</p> <p>14: Our Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal cultural heritage is protected and celebrated.</p>
Enhanced environment, natural assets and scenic qualities.	<p>11: Higher quality final landforms with shallower voids and more emphasis on progressive rehabilitation with local workforce participation.</p> <p>12: Enhance native vegetation connectivity across the Upper Hunter.</p> <p>13: Our local rivers and creeks are enhanced, utilised and valued.</p> <p>14: Support initiatives to reduce the community's impact on the environment.</p> <p>15: Support Federal and State initiatives to reduce human impact on climate change.</p>	<p>15: We protect and enhance land and habitats of environmental value and strengthen and protect biodiversity corridors.</p> <p>16: The rural and natural landscape is retained and enhanced.</p> <p>17: We rehabilitate waterways, improve water quality and water security.</p> <p>18: We adapt to climate change and build climate and hazard resilience.</p> <p>19: Development is suitable for the location, minimises environmental impact and responds to environmental characteristics.</p>